

Public Relations

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22 November 1976

STATINTL MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training
FROM : [REDACTED]
Deputy Director for Operations Training
SUBJECT : Report on Talk Before the Focus Club in
Richmond

1. I thought my talk to the Focus Club in Richmond, made on 17 November, went quite well. About 50 men were present representing a broad spectrum of activities. Those there included presidents of law firms, bank presidents, state legislators, newspaper editors, a television show commentator, one or two military officers, and a number of business men. Of the group, probably 10 to 15 percent was black.

2. The Focus Club president, in introducing me, reiterated the fact that my remarks should be strictly off the record. I then spoke for about 15 minutes, outlining my life in the Agency and the major changes which I had seen take place in its personnel, its method of operations, its accomplishments, and its mission. I acknowledged, as I always do in speaking to groups of this sort, that a few mistakes had been made, but that the Agency had brought these under control well before the onslaught of congressional investigations, and that we are now working with the new congressional oversight mechanism to prevent any possibility of recurrence. I further made the point that the Agency owed United States citizens a greater degree of accountability, and that the greatest single asset the Agency has working for it in its overseas mission is the fact that we are representatives of American society.

3. I was questioned thereafter for approximately an hour and a half. As is usual in talks of this sort, the questions reflected the pervasiveness and depth of misconceptions about the Agency. (I was asked for

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example whether the Agency accepts "any volunteers." By this the questioner meant job applicants. I took this opportunity to explain our recruitment process and our interest in hiring a small number of qualified Americans of all sexes, colors, and creeds.) Another question dealt with the newly instituted congressional investigations of the Kennedy assassination.

Q - Do you think any new evidence will be uncovered?

A - I doubt it very much, but I think the effort is worthwhile given the doubts which have been raised by the Warren Report.

I was asked a good deal about congressional oversight.

Q - Would congressional oversight have prevented the mistakes the Agency made in the past?

A - We had congressional oversight in the past, which did not exert a strong counterbalancing role to orders issued by the Executive Branch. We are determined to see that the new oversight mechanism works as it should.

4. Other questions dealt with current hot spots around the world--China, North and South Korea, the Middle East, etc. Other, rather supportive questions, allowed me to speak positively of the Agency's intelligence collecting and analyzing mission. The questioning was cut off by the Focus Club president, and after the meeting broke up I dealt with more questions informally for about 15 minutes. About one fourth of the group came up to thank me personally for my presentation. All remarks were enthusiastic.

5. Walter Craigie, the Richmond lawyer who invited me to speak, appeared pleased with the way my talk went and promised me some feedback in the form of a letter. One friendly questioner was Mr. MacNelly, the prize-winning cartoonist from the Richmond Post Dispatch. He

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was quite typical of the group--young, bright, articulate, and interested. I was highly impressed with my audience and was delighted to have spoken before them.



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